10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
563, 834 Ethnic subgroups

"...amongst the Thai's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved."

10: d'Orleans--266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 396, 462, 697, 834

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "As I walk down by the side of the river I find a very animated scene; prisoners are going to and fro with manacles on their legs, which do not seem to inconvenience them at all. Elsewhere, men are making rafts and cutting planks; some of them are sawing a tree; they work horizontally, in pairs, putting in wedges as they advance. Women are fetching water in buckets made of bamboo tubes; they take the opportunity of bathing, and do not seem hindered by any bashful feelings. There is a curious remark to make on this point: amongst the Thai's of the Black River, the men never hesitate to strip themselves, and enter the water; but the women appear more reserved; here, on the contrary, they are the ones that feel no shame, whilst their husbands seem to avoid undressing in our presence."

23: Franck--257-258 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 684, 834

"The conversation hovered chiefly about the women of Laos. The lieutenant [EJ: an officer in the Foreign Legion stationed in Laos] asserted, and was borne out by his wilderness companion of the sex under discussion, that to touch the [258] hair or breasts of a Laosian woman is a more serious crime than actual violation. In fact Laosian law prescribes a much more serious penalty for the former than for the latter indiscretion, and the lieutenant in his judicial capacity had often been called upon to try cases under this strange code. Naturally, he explained, again abetted by his lady-love, what the Western world considers the lesser of the two crimes might be committed entirely against the will of the victim, while the other...In brief, here was an example of Oriental wisdom to which the other side of the earth has not yet attained.

In a case of what, in the language we were then using, is called tromper le mari, the Laosians again outdid us in their sense of justice. By their law the lover is punished for the first offense, the woman for the second, and the husband for the third! For, as the lieutenant said, and his domestic partner again agreed, the woman who is party to such an act a second time must have some of the guilt; and the husband who is so inattentive as to be trompé three times is either a fool or is knowingly permitting it, and deserves punishment in either case."

68: Mouhot--272 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians
116, 155, 834, 515

"The men of this nation [HD: i. e. Luang Prabang] are dull and apathetic and full of small vices. The women are generally better, and some of them are even pretty in spite of their yellow skins, but they have little idea of modesty. The men and women all bathe together without any clothing. But for the people, Louang Prabang would be one of the most charming places in the world: the lake of Geneva does not present scenes more beautiful than many here by the river."

438
595 in each center who will represent him, handle business in his absence,
485 collect at leisure the stock of trading merchandise needed for the next [195] trip, and also provide a home for him where he is sure to find a smiling face and a warm welcome in the course of his wanderings.

554 Among the nobility and the so-called princely families polygamy
595 is the rule and is almost obligatory for the sake of prestige, which demands a greater or lesser number of concubines depending on the husband's rank. It may sometimes happen, for various reasons, that there are two wives whose progeniture enjoy a higher rank and inherit the titles and duties of the father. It also happens, in this social milieu, that the first wife or wives will see that their husband is growing old, worn out and morose, and will seek to distract him during his last years by making him marry quite young girls for whom he is more of a father than a husband but who give him the illusion of rejuvenation and bring joy and gaiety into the house with the light of their youth (1).

(1) Thanks to the docile character of Laotian women in general, and also to the atavistic imprint of custom which makes them regard polygamy as an entirely natural status, peace and harmony are rarely troubled in such households. A hierarchy naturally arises among the various wives and concubines. Each of them remains in the place assigned to her by the date of her entry into the household and enjoys any special favors which may be conferred on her by their common husband without arousing any jealousy.

Quarrels between wives are so rare that when one does by chance occur the corporal punishments decreed by ancient custom are unhesitatingly applied. The situation is of such a nature as to preserve among Laotian wives a spirit of conciliation and amiability which is not the least of their charms.

832 Kissing. Punishment for amatory offenses. Like most of the
834 peoples of the Far East, the Laotians do not indulge in kissing, at least not in the European manner. They rub their noses against the skin of their children or wives and sniff more or less noisily.

Although the morals of the Laotians seem excessively free to us and their remarks, songs and gestures often border on what we would describe as obscenity, we should not conclude that the Laotians are deliberately lewd or cynical. They are instinctively careful to be

decently covered at all times, [196] especially in public. There is nothing to shock one's modesty, then, if their clothing is by some chance disordered or even if they take it off completely, as when bathing. It may be said that Laotians of both sexes feel the utmost repugnance to disrobing when they sense that they are observed.

Although it is true that during festivals and certain public celebrations the men parade "phalli" and make suggestive gestures, and that extremely licentious remarks are exchanged on such occasions, we should remember that all these actions are a vestige of the paganism under which the male organ was glorified as an emblem of generation. The acts are much rather the traces of a rite surviving from a religion of the earliest times than an obscene provocation made before an audience in which there are a large number of children.

The sentiment of pudicity is so very real in Laos, despite appearances to the contrary, that the laws specify comparatively heavy punishments for contact in public between individuals of opposite sexes. These penalties vary with the acts committed, which are classified in three categories:

1. Clasping the waist, kissing;
2. Touching the breasts, fondling;
3. Rape.

Prison, corporal punishments and fines are the penalties applied to offenders. They vary in severity depending on the rank of the girl or wife, that is to say depending on whether she is of common, noble or royal blood. Sentence may be pronounced by the court on the basis merely of a statement by the plaintiff, or on the basis of a statement by a third party, whether an eyewitness, relative, friend or simple passerby.

The fines paid by gallants who are too enterprising and not sufficiently discreet are used as offerings accompanied by propitiatory sacrifices either to the protective "Phis" of the victims or to the Spirits or Genii of their region or house. It is customary, finally, to offer a feast to nearby relatives and friends whom one may suppose to have been offended by the reprehensible acts of the guilty parties. [197] [Illustration] [198] [Blank page] [199]

Adultery. Divorce. "Since natural inclinations are rarely opposed in Laos, and since divorce is an extremely simple matter through mere mutual consent, cases of adultery are very rare.

"Divorces, on the other hand, are numerous.